

The Gurnet - Part V

By HERBERT BOARDMAN

(Written in 1935)

1891. Probably the most distinguished visitor of the Boardman regime was William Moody, who registered in July. Mr. Moody was a poet and dramatist of note, and at the time, studying at Harvard.

Eugene Shippen, a minister of repute, was also a guest. Lindsey Swift came again and a certain Edward Howe, who found the path to "Naugatuck so irresistible he ended by marrying Ella Holmes!

Some imaginative person claimed to have seen a sea-serpent off the point and drew a picture of it in the register.

1892. Arthur Boardman married Maude Upham in 1891 and on April 4, 1892 their son Herbert Boardman, author of this narrative, first saw the light of day in Somerville. In July, when 3 months old, he was brought to the Gurnet for the first time. He was sick soon after his arrival there, but the invigorating Gurnet atmosphere soon restored him to health. Dr. Aiken, who was sojourning there at the time, pronounced the Gurnet air to be as beneficial as that enjoyed on a sea voyage.

In 1892 the new and present Coast Guard Station was built on the site of the old one at a cost of \$6400. The old structure was moved to Saquish Beach to be used as a boathouse. It stood for 6 years in the sand dunes at the bend of the beach.

On Oct. 8, 1892, the Powder Point Bridge, one-half mile in length, was opened. This was an important event because it shortened the distance from the railroad by 3 miles. After that the Gurnet residents used the Duxbury station. The lovely ride through the attractive town of Duxbury, over the new bridge and down the long beach was now about 6 miles. It was now possible, with horse and carriage, to travel from the Gurnet House to Duxbury Station in the amazing time of 2 hours or less, that is, if the tide was out. (Note by Marjorie Boardman: It practically never is out. I know from experience.)

Mr. Boardman was now able to do much of his shopping in Duxbury, at Freeman's, later Sweetser's and Arnold's, and Ford's department stores. He still patronized the Boston markets for some of his provisions.

1893. This might be called the "babies summer" as there were several babies at the Gurnet House that year. The stove was covered with sterilizers most of the time. It was the author's first entry in the register and he played on the sands with another infant, Russell Tarleton, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Tarleton of Watertown, where Mr. Tarleton was postmaster. They registered in July, as did the families of Charles Miller of Brookline and George Perrin. The Watertown people heard of the place through Edward Howe, of the musical instrument firm of Elias Howe. The Howes, with their infant daughter Adele, were neighbors of the Tarletons on Dana Terrace. The Howes later built a large house in Needham. Later the Hadsells of Watertown came.

The Millers and the Perrins were Christian Scientists and one Sunday afternoon during an impromptu baseball game, Mr. Perrin sprained his ankle. He was brought back to the house and retired to his room with his wife. Half an hour later he came out healed.

The Hadsell baby was taken ill soon after this. Mrs. Hadsell was frantic with fear as no doctor was available. Mrs. Perrin took the child to her room for the night, promising to return him to his mother if he cried. She treated him in Christian Science and he was completely healed by morning. This interested the Hadsell family in Christian Science.

It was in one of these early summers that the author, then a small child, came near a fatal accident. His father placed him in a little cart attached to a flying kite. The kite drew the little cart dangerously near the edge of the high bluff and he was caught just in time.

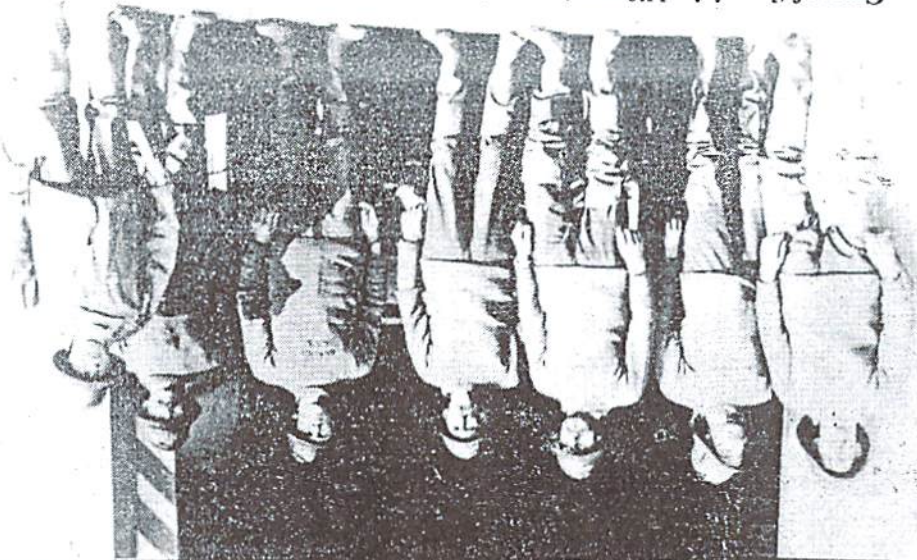
On July 31, Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard Upham of New York arrived. The Uphams remained impervious to the many charms of the Gurnet because of the mosquitoes. Mr. Upham was in the commercial sign painting business in New York. The mosquitoes have always been a drawback to the Gurnet, but in recent years the nuisance has been abated somewhat due to the draining and oiling of the bog-holes and marsh pools.

1894. Fishing, lobstering, gunning and clamming provided diversion at all times. The sea bathing was also a popular pastime. While some hardy souls preferred the Gurnet Beach with its high surf and cold water, the warmer waters of the Saquish Beach were preferred by many. Capt. Holmes would not allow his family to use the so called 'back beach' because of the undertow, always present, even in the calmest weather. The Gurnet is always delightful and cool in summer, all the breezes blow off the water and even on the hottest days a breeze springs up from somewhere and sweeps across the point.

About this time an exciting event happened. The Cunard Line steamship "Pavonia," off her course in the fog, mistook the lights of the Gurnet for the lights of Thatcher's Island, off Gloucester and struck High Pine Ledge about a mile or so off Duxbury Beach. The ship was not seriously damaged but many of the people were brought ashore and a bevy of reporters from Boston swarmed around.

1895. A new lighthouse keeper, Capt. Alfred Eisner, a native of Bremen, Me., replaced Capt. Gorham. Capt. Eisner served for 7 or 8 years.

A young man named Elmer Hali and, of course, Tom Hennigan worked on the farm. All the livestock loved Tom; he even had a baby seal (which had swum



Crew of the original life-saving station at Gurnet. The captain was F. W. Holmes.

ashore). He kept it in a pool in the marsh and he trained it to answer to his whistle and eat out of his hand.

At one time, a youth employed by Mr. Boardman came trembling with fear to his employer exclaiming that the end of the world was surely near as land had appeared in the middle of the ocean. Mr. Boardman was greatly amused to find a mirage, revealing Provincetown and the shores of Cape Cod, was visible. At another time, Mr. Boardman called for his wife to come and see his poultry yard. Upon approaching the bluff she saw 2 long lines of sea gulls posed on the water.

It is possible to see the monument of Provincetown on a clear day and the flashing of Highland Light at night. It is also possible to count that famous 1-4-3 Flash of Minot's Light.

1896. This year, Mrs. Boardman issued an attractive advertising circular, with photographs, describing the many attractions of Gurnet House; accommodations for 20-25 people; terms, \$7-\$10 per week.

(From now on the writer will write largely in the first person as this is the first summer he remembers much about the Gurnet.)

My family was there over 4th of July and it was probably on this Independence Day that my father had so much fun with his cannons. When it was time for the excursion steamer from Boston to round the point, he filled a cannon with old boots, overalls and other ruff-raff with which to salute the steamer. At the report of the cannon, Mrs. Holmes looked out the window in time to see these articles of clothing go flying through the air. She cried out in great excitement, "The steamer has blown up and everyone has been blown to bits. There are arms and legs flying in the air everywhere!"

There were 2 steamers plying between Boston and Plymouth, the "Pilgrim" and the "Lily." The passing of the steamer was the big event of the day for Gurnet residents. They would gather on the bluff and frantically wave to the passengers on board. The steamer would occasionally "toot" a return salute.